

**REMARKS:**

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested. The Applicant has amended the claims to place them in condition for allowance and no new matter is being introduced in this Amendment.

The pending claims in the present application are claims 1, 3-4, 6-9, 11-22 and 24-32. Claims 2, 5, 10 and 23 have been cancelled. The independent claims include claims 1, 9, 18 and 31.

In the February 21, 2006 Official Action, the Examiner indicated that Claims 18-22 and 24-30 are allowable over the prior art of record and further indicated that Claim 5 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, the Applicant incorporated the subject matter of Claim 5 into independent Claim 1, in particular, the inclusion of the “uintaite”. In view of the above, newly amended independent Claim 1 and its dependent claims 3-4 and 6-8 should now be allowable.

In the Official Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 31 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patel (U.S. Patent No. 5,925,182). In response, the Applicant has amended independent Claim 31 to include the subject matter of newly amended independent Claim 1, in particular, the inclusion of “copolymer beads and uintaite”.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner’s rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Patel has been overcome and should be removed.

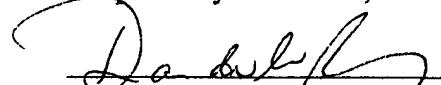
The Examiner also rejected Claims 9, 11-14 and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rayborn (U.S. Patent No. 4,063,603) in view of DeBeer (U.S. Patent No. 5,401,719). In response, the Applicant has amended independent Claim 9 to include the subject matter of newly amended independent Claim 1, in particular, the inclusion of “uintaite”.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner’s rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Rayborn in combination with DeBeer has been overcome and should be removed.

In view of the actions taken and arguments presented, it is respectfully submitted  
that the present invention is now in condition for allowance.

An early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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